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THE ARMAMENTS OF THE FUTURE.—WHERE WILL THEY STOP?

BY FREDERIC PASSY.

Translated from *La Conférence Interparlementaire*.

Under this double title, well calculated to invite attention, a superior officer, a retired colonel of cavalry, Colonel Thomas, honorably known for his important labors in connection with the newspaper, *Le Temps*, has just published, from the military publishing house of Charles Lavauzelle, a brochure well worthy of the careful attention of war men and of peace men.

I do not need to say that it is as a peace man that I think I ought to make mention of it, and it is as such that the author has done me the honor of sending me a copy of it. He wishes to know the opinion of an advocate of arbitration. He himself makes appeal to arbitration, we shall see for what purpose and under what conditions.

It will be guessed, without the necessity of calling attention to the fact, that it is the author's purpose to protest against the monstrous development of present-day

armaments, and that his utterance is a cry of alarm, coming from the ranks of those whose business has been war, in view of the dangers with which war threatens civilization. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the author repudiates war and comes and enrolls himself, intentionally, in the ranks of his enemies.

It is not war, however, which he arraigns; so he seems to think. But what he dislikes is the manner in which it will have to be carried on hereafter. War, that is the appeal to force for settling differences between nations; war, that is the meeting of two armies vying with each other for the supremacy, struggling for independence, for territory, for riches, for influence, not only does the good colonel believe in this, but he considers it one of the necessities of human existence; nay, more; he admires it, glorifies it, loves it. War to him, as well as to many of those who have been engaged in it, is one of the noblest manifestations of that energy which creates human greatness. It tests character; it cultivates patriotism; it produces heroes; it prevents peoples from being corrupted by selfishness. It has its sad aspects, certainly, but it has also its intoxication and its glory. A fine battle, in which are freely exhibited those brilliant qualities which are called war-like virtues, is one of those scenes which lift man above himself; it is, Colonel Thomas says in so many words, a *beautiful tournament* to which people go as to a *festival*.

This is all on one condition, however, which war, such as it threatens to become, will never again be able to realize; viz., that in this encounter in which the lot of the country even is sometimes at stake, men shall still count for something; that it shall be they, who, by their courage, their penetration, their decision, in a word their personal action, shall be the real agents in the struggle, instead of the blind and irresistible machines without conscience and without soul of which they shall be only the helpless victims; that "the foot soldier may be able to use his bayonet, the cavalier his sabre and his horse, that the artilleryman may not be liable at any moment to see his battery dismantled by a projectile whose effects a *savant* has quietly prepared in his laboratory, and that fine-looking men, healthy and vigorous, the strength and hope of their generation, may not be annihilated without fighting, by *treacherous explosives*."

Fighting thus understood, these "butcheries at a distance," in which people smite and are smitten without seeing anything, these "mechanical slaughters" gotten up by chemists and engineers, in which men are nothing more than those animals which are put by thousands into the slaughter houses of Chicago to be there automatically turned into bacon and sausage,—all this, says Colonel Thomas, "*is no longer war.*" And if that is what science leads us to make of it, there is only one course left and that is to throw away the science. "I admire science," he adds, "when it is employed by good men like Pasteur in relieving the human race, but it saddens me greatly when it seeks only to destroy."

And, seized with alarm and horror at the thought of this irresistible power of destruction put by science at the disposal of the armies of the future, he asks with indignant feeling if it is not about time to take measures to stop its progress; if it would not be proper, for example, to interdict the use of explosive balls, rapid-firing guns, dispersive shells, melinite, roburite, dynamite, even smokeless powder "which disconcerts all the received tactics and no longer leaves any opportunity for personal bravery."

It is for this reason that he would have recourse to international arbitration, convinced, he says, that the sentiment of reprobation which he experiences is shared in by all men of feeling, and not less convinced that if reasonable laws of war were once formulated by a collective judgment no nation would dare to depart from them.

I need not say that I share perfectly the feelings inspired in Colonel Thomas and many of the better officers by the perspective of the frightful butcheries which war, with the means which it possesses to-day, holds in reserve for the nations imprudent enough to allow themselves to be drawn into it. I have expressed myself a hundred times on the subject, I am doing so every day, and there is no occasion for repeating myself here.

But, *it is still war*, I say, begging the pardon of those who, under the new aspects, find it very frightful and refuse to recognize it because, while developing its power, it has developed its defects, as it was fated that it should do. I am sure their talk and action will be in vain; they will not succeed in preventing the purpose of war from being to destroy, to kill, to ravage, to exterminate. I may add that it is deceiving one's self to imagine that it has not always been so, and to set over against the frightful picture of the destructions of the future some picture of war in the past as a gentle and restrained affair. Colonel Thomas recalls Fontenoy and the famous utterance: *Messieurs les Anglais, tirez les premiers!* (Englishmen, shoot first). This, he says, did not prevent Marshall de Saxe from winning a splendid victory. They fought with this chivalric courtesy in those times. Yes, a chivalric courtesy on the part of the chiefs, for whom their men, living playthings of the day, were nothing

but ten-pins set up on the table, a larger or a smaller number of whom were to be knocked down in order to win the game. Chivalric courtesy! which did not prevent the bulk of the two armies from being, as is the case to-day, food for cannon, no more than it prevented the peaceable populations from being ruined, trodden under foot, pillaged as they were, alas! it is only too well remembered, by Turenne in the Palatinate, and as it is impossible that they would be to-day.

Was it not in reference to this battle of Fontenoy that the Marquis of Argenson wrote to Voltaire: "Triumph is the most beautiful thing in the world. The shouts of 'long live the king;' the hats in the air on the end of bayonets; the compliments of the leader to his warriors; the visiting of the entrenchments, the villages and the redoubts so intact; the joy, the glory, the tenderness. *But the platform of all that is human blood.*"

Struggles hand to hand, in which nevertheless what was done and with whom one had to do was much less seen than is generally supposed; granted. But it was always slaughter; and slaughter which was none the better because the slayer himself held the knife and felt the flesh of his victim quivering in his hand. Heroic struggles; granted. But they were frightful struggles, in which, as at Leipzig and as in Italy in 1859, cannon were seen to pass over the bodies of the wounded and sometimes of the unwounded, crushing limbs and breasts under their wheels and literally sinking in human mud. Heroic struggles; but struggles in which, as after the taking of Magdeburg by Tilly, cities were given up to pillage for several days, because it was necessary to give a little loose rein to the soldier, and which had as their inevitable accompaniment all the atrocities of that war of the Avari and the Bulgari recounted by Voltaire in *Candide*, atrocities at which our fathers laughed, as Madame de Sévigné laughed at the hanging of the Bretons, so familiar were they with them, but the recital of which we can no longer to-day endure, because a new sense of pity has been awakened in us, affecting the heart even of men of war.

An expression of Marshall Bosquet has often been cited (Colonel Thomas cites it in his turn) in reference to the fierceness of his Algerian sharpshooters at Inkerman: "They are panthers leaping about among the bushes." The fate of circumstances, alas! may sometimes constrain men to become panthers. But men were not made to be panthers, and war inevitably condemns them to be so. It is precisely because people are beginning to perceive this, that war is beginning to be condemned on all hands.

Let us try then to see things as they are. No—in spite of appearances, the frightful power of destruction with which science has endowed war, has not rendered it more cruel, although it has perhaps rendered it more deadly. It has rendered its cruelty more visible, by enabling it to deal heavier blows, and by stripping it of everything

which could conceal its horror. On the moral side as on the physical it has suppressed the smoke of powder. It has awakened in all, and in men of war first, a repulsion hitherto dormant. The pamphlet which suggests to me these reflections is nothing more than a manifestation of this new spirit and of the way in which the methods of war are beginning to be viewed. In this account it deserved to be mentioned, and I thank the author for giving me opportunity to call attention to it.

It deserves to be mentioned from another point of view, and, with Colonel Thomas's permission, because of another illusion, which I am far from reproaching him with; an illusion, furthermore, which is only half so, because it has some real foundation in fact.

Colonel Thomas, in order to bring about that humanization of war which seems to him desirable, but which might prove to be merely a way of developing the evil while seeming to render it inactive, proposes an international arbitration. Simply by pronouncing this word, he renders a spontaneous and important tribute to the as yet too much contested value of a method of proceeding which many times already has prevented war, and which, if unable to abolish it everywhere and always, tends at least to render it rarer and to render the human race unaccustomed to it. But he makes a mistake, if he will pardon me for saying so, in asking of arbitration what arbitration can not give. War is war, and all the agreements in the world will never prevent it from being war. Pity is a beautiful thing; but when the cannon is speaking there is no place for pity; when war is declared self-possession is gone and can not be recovered; one must conquer, must defend himself. All means are good, because all become necessary. The human beast is unmuzzled. It is useless to tell him to withhold his claws and his teeth. It is his business to bite and rend. If you do not wish him to do so; if you do not wish by his help to call out all the demons of hell, do not unmuzzle him. In other words do not try to civilize barbarism. Do not seek to render violence reasonable and humane. Do not attempt to forbid fire to burn and the sword to smite. Do better; extinguish the sparks before the fire breaks out. Keep the sword in the scabbard and do not let it get out. Reconcile differences, before they become open hostilities. And since you have confidence in international arbitration, since its increasing influence has brought you, in spite of yourself, to invoke its intervention, ask it to do away with wars instead of requesting it to mollify them. This is more efficacious, and less difficult; for it is a thing which is constantly being done.

Another word before laying down my pen. There is another incident of Inkerman which Colonel Thomas must know and which he has not mentioned. It is the incident of that English officer who wanted to go over the battle field. On the day after the engagement he could

not resist the temptation to do so, and seized with a violent attack of fever he kept repeating: "Take away from me these corpses." He had gone mad, you will say. Perhaps. But humanity will not become wise until the day when it shall have been seized with that species of madness.

THE NATION'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEACE.

Address delivered at the New England Convention of the National Reform Association held at Boston in February, 1895.

BY BENJAMIN F. TRUEBLOOD, LL. D.

A nation's responsibility for making and keeping peace, in its relations to other nations, is the same as that of the individual in his relations to others. There is not one moral law for men and another for nations. The principles which ought to govern the life and conduct of the one are equally obligatory in the case of the other. The moral law is as unbending, the conscience as imperative when a man voluntarily compounds his deeds with those of other men as when he acts alone. Whatever in principle is a crime for a man is a crime for a nation.

Individuals are under obligation, according to accessible light, to accept and to follow the moral law of right, and the Christian law of love. Nothing else dare be asserted of nations. The Golden Rule spans the seas and reaches across national frontiers as well as over the distances which separate individual men. It is a radically false position that a nation exists for itself alone, for the exclusive good of its own people. It exists for others as for itself. The law of love and of self-sacrifice is an essential part, is indeed the very highest part of the expression of its outgoing life. No nation, therefore, can rightly be called Christian which does not, in its relations to all other peoples, follow this law. If it be impossible, as has been asserted in prominent quarters, to found and conduct a State on the principles contained in the sermon on the mount, then no Christian nation can ever exist. From all this it follows that positive peace-making, not peace-keeping merely but the effort to bring the peoples of the earth to a permanent state of peace and harmonious co-operation, is the very highest of the nation's obligations.

The responsibility of a nation rests upon its geographical position and limits; its intellectual and moral enlightenment; its power of exerting influence, whether this be material, intellectual or moral; its religious, social and political ideals and purposes; and its general historic character and development. Looked at from these various standpoints, it will be easily seen that responsibility for the creation and maintenance of the peace of the world rests upon the United States as upon no other country.

Our country is predestined by its geographical position and extent to be the peace-maker of the world; it ought